



February 9, 2009

South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team Update

As you know, the last South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team (SMCAT) meeting was held on October 23. The purpose of this publication is to continue the communication between the SMCAT, the facilitators of the SMCAT meetings (Tom Keller and Fred Erickson with Knowledge Capital Alliance), the Arizona Department of Transportation and the other members of the study team while the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared for public review.

Study Status

On January 23, Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) representatives delivered a presentation to MAG's Transportation Policy Committee regarding funding issues related to Proposition 400 identified projects. Because sales tax revenues are down significantly owing to the state's recession, there may be necessary alterations to the scope and timing of several freeway projects. A review of projects by MAG, in conjunction with ADOT, currently is under way. At this time, no decisions have been made. MAG has set a summer 2009 timeframe to decide possible revisions to the freeways, and a fall 2009 timeframe to update and amend the Regional Transportation Plan.

For the proposed South Mountain Freeway, there are numerous options being reviewed by MAG that could be available to the South Mountain Freeway study team if proposed funding levels have to be reduced. They are:

- ☐ Continue with current plans for six-lane freeway construction; clear and obtain right-of-way for ultimate 10-lane freeway
- ☐ Construct as a six-lane freeway only with provision for high-occupancy vehicle lanes in median
- ☐ "State Route 51 Option" – Build freeway within narrower right-of-way footprint
- ☐ Construct as an Arizona Parkway within freeway right-of-way
- ☐ Construct as an Arizona Parkway within parkway right-of-way
- ☐ No build

Currently, ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are following standard National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedure and are reviewing the technical information in the Draft EIS to address data updates since the initial writing of the document. The discussion of possible changes to the South Mountain Freeway, such as building a parkway instead of a freeway, have delayed the Draft EIS. Any significant changes ultimately embraced by MAG would require revised assessments within the EIS, and extend the amount of time to complete it. The draft EIS then would be reviewed for legal sufficiency and released for public comment. There will be a 90-day review period that also will include a public hearing. But given the funding uncertainties and the possibility of project alterations, it is impossible to say at this time when the Draft EIS would be ready. Near the conclusion of the 90-day review period, it is anticipated that the SMCAT would make a recommendation on whether this transportation corridor should

be constructed.

SMCAT Meetings

The determination of future SMCAT meetings in 2009 likely hinges on what changes, if any, MAG adopts for the South Mountain Freeway. As of now, the SMCAT may meet at least four more times in 2009. The remaining meeting topics include non project-specific air quality, project-specific air quality, a Draft EIS open discussion and the SMCAT recommendation. However, this schedule could change. When new information surfaces that warrant an additional meeting, ADOT will make arrangements so that the SMCAT could meet to discuss the details.

Air Quality Panel

The study team is reviewing the SMCAT's suggestions regarding the candidate list of potential air quality panel members. A list of the recommended members for the non project-specific air quality and project-specific air quality meetings will be provided to you in the future for review.

Bulletin Board

The study team has developed an online bulletin board to facilitate discussion between the SMCAT members. The bulletin board can be accessed at <http://southmountainfreeway.blogspot.com>. Please use the contact information at the bottom of this e-mail to let us know your opinion about this medium as a means to continue communication concerning the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

SMCAT Questions

SMCAT members are encouraged to contact Tom Keller if they or the organization that they represent have questions during the South Mountain Freeway study process. In January and early February, questions and comments were received from two SMCAT members.

SMCAT Member:

Would the E1 pkwy concept overlay only the existing Pecos Road? Can an E1 parkway be built entirely on land currently owned by ADOT? If not, what portions of the E1 would need to be acquired? Would the church at Pecos Road and 24th Street lose any of its existing property with an E1 parkway? Would the Lakewood community lose any homes with an E1 parkway? Would retention requirements north of the E1 be significantly reduced or completely eliminated with a parkway concept? Can big trucks be restricted from traveling on an E1 parkway? Would an E1 parkway remove more than a few percent of total traffic volume from the Broadway Curve?

ADOT: ADOT has not analyzed in detail the aspects of constructing a parkway on Pecos Road.

SMCAT Member:

Would the EIS process need to be restarted for a parkway to be considered?

ADOT: It may not be necessary to restart the EIS process to consider a parkway concept. The Draft EIS, when issued, would consider the impacts of the proposed facility, whether it is a parkway or freeway. If it is determined that a parkway concept be considered, it would be necessary to document the potential impacts. Currently, the Draft EIS evaluates a freeway concept.

SMCAT Member: Here is a link to a newspaper article in the Ahwatukee Foothills News:

http://www.ahwatukee.com/news/parkway_5732_article.html/freeway_mag.html. There is also a similar article that was published in the Arizona Republic about the feasibility of the South Mountain Freeway becoming a parkway. I thought this was discussed at the last SMCAT meeting, where it was agreed that MAG could not just change the freeway to a parkway. I have heard MAG has changed the definition of a parkway so that it can also relate into a class of freeway. I think this should be addressed in our next meeting.

ADOT: This subject is addressed in this e-newsletter.

Questions or Comments

If you have any questions or comments about the South Mountain Transportation Corridor Study, please write Tom Keller at Knowledge Capital Alliance, 4425 E. Agave Road, Building 5, Suite 122, (480) 705-8444 .

This e-mail list will not be shared for non-ADOT purposes. If you would like to share this with others, feel free to forward. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about the any of the projects described above.

ADOT Communication and Community Partnerships
General Questions: [Contact ADOT](#)

Southwest Valley Community Outreach Team
E-mail: tk@kca-inc.com
Hotline: 602.288.9905